



Jesus is Transfigured

Matthew 17:1-9

Theophilus leaned over a yellow rosebud and breathed in deeply. He smiled as the sweet scent reached his nose. Standing up again, he looked around at the bright colors of the garden which seemed to almost glow in the early morning sunlight. As the castle gardener, this was his favorite time of day to walk through the garden of the King and enjoy its beauty.

"Hail, Theophilus!" Gus' voice interrupted the calm, peaceful morning. Theophilus looked up to see Gus riding up the path on, his horse, Duncan.

"Hail, Squire Gus!" Theophilus greeted him. "I hear you are doing well in your training. Rumor has it you defended the Kingdom against Robespierre."

"Thank you, kind Theophilus. I live to serve the King!" Gus announced proudly as he tried to raise his sword in salute. As usual, he lost his grip and the sword flew out of his hand. Theophilus, now used to ducking to avoid being hit by the flying blade, did so without even thinking. Suddenly they heard the sound of barking.

"I know, that sound!" Gus smiled, "It's the sound of the royal dragon."

Rufus growled angrily. "Doggy! He meant doggy!" Theophilus exclaimed.

"Have you a message for us?" Gus asked.

Rufus tossed a bag of coins to Gus and stared without blinking.

"Why do we need money?" Gus wondered as he looked into the bag. "Are we going to the store?"

Rufus shook his head and barked several times.

"Oh, is this change?" Theophilus asked. Rufus barked his approval. "It is change!" Theophilus exclaimed. "Ah, of course, Rufus! The kingdom of God is all about change! Thank you for reminding us."

Rufus barked and flew up and over the castle and out of sight.

"God bless you, too Rufus!" Theophilus called after him. He turned back around to Gus who had a very confused look on his face.

"What kind of message is that? God's kingdom is about change? I thought it was about being the best," Gus said.

Theophilus smiled knowingly and explained, "Oh Gus, God does want us to give him our best. But, he also plans that as we spend more time with King Jesus we will change and become more like Him."

"So...God wants me to change?" Gus asked.

"Most things do change," Theophilus said with a nod. "Even Jesus changed. Well, just His appearance changed, that is. He was transfigured!"

"What does that mean?" Gus asked.

"Transfigured? It means to be transformed or changed. It's a little complicated. Here, let me get the Manual out and I'll explain it right now!" The Gardener led Gus to the center of the garden and removed the Bible from its special window. He turned to Matthew 17:1-9. "In this report, Jesus went up a mountain with His friends Peter, James and John. Suddenly, His face and clothes began to change."

Gus sat down on a nearby bench. "Changed into what?" he asked.

"His face shone like the sun and His clothes became as white as light. Just then Moses and Elijah appeared, talking with Jesus."

Gus' eyes grew wide with surprise. "But those guys lived hundreds of years before them. Peter must have been freaked out!"

"Wait until you hear what happened next!" Theophilus quoted from the Bible, "While He was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!'"

Gus thought for a moment, "That's the same thing God said when Jesus was baptized!"

"Yes! You have a good memory, Squire Gus! But this time God said more than 'This is my Son, whom I love.' What else did God say?"

"God said, 'Listen to Him!' God was telling us to obey Jesus. Theophilus, why do you think God made all this happen?"

"Perhaps it was God's way of showing them that Jesus is both God and Man," Theophilus said.

"That's kind of a hard thing to understand," Gus said. He rubbed his forehead as if his head hurt from trying to understand the idea.

"But God loved them enough to show them that He was God who came to earth as a man!" Theophilus tried to explain further.

"If I were there I would fall on my face before the Lord!" Gus exclaimed.

Theophilus smiled. "Do you know that is the very thing the disciples did? But Jesus touched them and said, 'Get up, don't be afraid.' Then, when they got up, they saw only Jesus."

Gus jumped up from the bench. "Wow, that is amazing! They were in the presence of the all-powerful God, but He loved them so much that He comforted them."

"That is how much King Jesus loves us. And it is His love that makes us want to change our ways and be more like Him," Theophilus said.

"I want to change! I want to be transformed! What must I do?" Gus nearly shouted.

"God said to listen," Theophilus reminded. "How can we listen to Jesus?"

"Well...one way is by reading and obeying the things we learn in God's Word," Gus answered.

Theophilus patted the young man on the back. "Oh Gus, I think you are growing more like Jesus everyday!"

"May I sit here for a while and read the Manual? I would like to read and listen to God's Word. I will put the Bible back in its special window before I leave," Gus promised.

"You may! Stay as long as you wish," Theophilus agreed. He gave the Bible to Gus and walked towards his tool shed to begin his day's work of caring for the garden.

Gus sat back down on the bench and opened the Bible. He couldn't wait to listen to God's Word.